

[Transcript] No Such Thing As A Fish / 481: No Such Thing As Taming A Plane

Hi everybody, Dan and Andy here. Just to let you know that our special guest on this week's fish is none other than

Ann Miller. You will remember Ann because she's been on loads of times before, though she hasn't been on for a little while.

We are so excited to see her again.

Ann is a brilliant children's author. She's written Mickey and the Animal Spies, a series of children's books all about animals spying and codes.

They're fabulous. And as you're about to hear, she is obviously a magnificent researcher and elf.

So we hope you enjoy this episode.

That's right. We also just want to quickly say happy birthday publication to Andrew Hunter Murray because the sanctuary, yeah, has just been released in paperback.

This is such a brilliant book. It's a book that is so brilliant that Waterstones have actually decided to make it the thriller of the month.

So you're going to see it everywhere in bookshops. And it's a book that's been called Many Things by Many Great People.

It's been called Imaginative and Intriguing. The sanctuary sucks you in and doesn't let you leave until the very last page by Anthony Horowitz.

It's a brilliantly clever thriller by a brilliantly clever author, says Richard Osman. They are all telling the truth.

Oh, Dan, thank you. Yeah, guys, it would mean the absolute world to me if you picked up a copy of the sanctuary in paperback.

It's a gripping twisty thriller set on a mysterious island off the coast up north where one of the world's wealthiest, most enigmatic men is building an entirely new society.

It's all about that and what the young hero from the city finds when he goes and sees this new world being built.

It's about billionaires. It's about mysterious islands. It's about the near future.

If you're looking for a gripping summer read on the beach, I think this could be the one for you.

That's right. And it's also brilliant. So do make sure you go and get a copy from our own personal Sunday Times bestselling author here on the show, Andrew Hunter Murray, as I say, available in all good bookshops, both online and in the real world.

Do pick it up, help our buddy out to get back in that Sunday Times chart. All right, on with the show. On with the podcast.

Hello, and welcome to another episode of No Such Thing as a Fish, a weekly podcast coming to you from the QI offices in Hoburn.

My name is Dan Schreiber. I'm sitting here with James Harkin, Andrew Hunter Murray and Ann Miller.

And once again, we have gathered around the microphones with our four favorite facts from the last seven days.

And in a particular order here, we go starting with fact number one. And that is Ann.

My fact is that Anne of Green Gables is from the same island as the world's largest potato sculpture. Welcome back.

Are you suggesting a link, a causal link between the two great literature and great snacks?

Oh, that's yeah.

It's a large potato, a great snack. I'm not coming around the house. Super Bowl Sunday.

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So I don't know really who Anne of Green Gables is.

So I give you a potter's Anne of Green Gables one on one. So Anne of Green Gables is one of my favorite books of all time.

It is set on Prince Edward Island in Canada. I was given it when I was very young.

And the setting is just completely beautiful. So the thing about Anne is she is an orphan.

This brother and sister called Matthew Marilla live at a place called Green Gables, and they are convinced to adopt an orphan boy to help them on the farm.

But when they go to collect the boy, it's Anne. She's a chatterbox. She's imaginative.

She gets into endless scrapes, but they love her and she sort of builds this new life on Prince Edward Island.

And when I was a little bit older, my godmother sent me a postcard from Green Gables.

And it was as if someone had sent me a card from Narnia. I didn't understand how she'd been somewhere that was in a book.

And I remember being so confused. And like, it was like, I had a nice time at Green Gables.

And I was like, how did you get there?

It's not a really big potato. Did she say that as well?

She did not. She did not. I found out about that more recently.

But yeah, so the island, because Lizzie Moore Montgomery, who wrote the book, lived there.

Anne is set there. There's lots of places in the book that are actually there.

And it's a sweeping series. There are several books beyond Anne of Green Gables.

And I was planning the trip of a lifetime to go and see Prince Edward Island for somewhere 2020.

So I didn't make it there. But while I was reading about Prince Edward Island,

I found out that they also are the home of the Canadian Potato Museum.

And outside is a 4.3 meter tall potato. We had a picture taken.

And I just, I almost want to go there as much as I want to go through Green Gables.

It's got exhibitions. It's got potatoes in tiny coffins to show the different diseases they can have.

It's got a potato themed gift shop. It's got a potato themed restaurant.

So you can have baked potato with side of crisps. You can have potato skins, potato soup.

And what do you reckon you can have for pudding?

Oh, I know that they make potato fudge there. Yeah.

Potato fudge. Potato fudge.

With mashed potato.

Wow. I did have a quick look at TripAdvisor for the Potato Museum.

Pretty overwhelmingly good. I think it's also a tribute to Canadian positivity and politeness.

Which one of you picked out there?

Oh, you know, obviously I was looking at for the negative reviews.

Actually, there are very few, which is a tribute to the restaurant.

Yeah, but let's hear the one at the same time.

Well, there's one three star review, which sniffs that the big potato could have been a little more realistic.

The TripAdvisor review does suggest a duration one to two hours for your visit, which I think by the end of the second hour, you'll be running short of things to do.

But you're right, they have absolutely loads of stuff.

They say it's a living testament to the humble tuber and those who have tilled the soil in its

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evolution.

Did they have any two or one star reviews?

They had so few, actually, that I think it would be unrepresentative of me to read any out.

And I didn't write any down because they weren't very amusingly written.

But it's clearly a very popular place.

The museum was started by a guy called Dr Lloyd George Dewar, who was a politician.

And I tried to find anything interesting about him.

It was really tough.

I even went into like these, what they call it, the websites that tell you about your family.

Oh, like, yeah, yeah, ancestry.

Yeah, like an ancestry one.

And I found out that his great grandfather died at the age of 101 in the town of Dole in Persia.

The only interesting fact about that.

So I could find, yeah.

That's great.

Amazing. How heavy was the sculpture potato again, by the way?

Oh, they didn't say the weight.

They don't say the weight.

Just the height.

Just the height.

Because I found the world's heaviest potato and was just curious.

How heavy is the heaviest?

Well, it's going to be a lot less heavy, I assume.

We're saying heavy is real potato.

Is it a real one?

Yeah, it's a real potato, which was just under five kilograms.

Nice.

And that, well, that, no, that's, I know, well, this is the thing, because potatoes aren't water bearing organisms like your squashes.

That's why the big squashes are kind of a ton.

And the biggest potato, but it's grown by a friend of the podcast, Peter Glazebrook, who we've mentioned several times before,

because he's done things like the longest bean,

or the biggest marrow or whatever it is.

He's got a load of those records.

He's a UK guy.

Yeah, he is.

He's a champion.

We should get him into the building sometime.

Shake his hand.

Unfortunately, he won't fit through the door.

He can carry his bean the other way, you know.

Oh, that's a good point.

But what about the nine foot apple?

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I wanted to find a bigger potato to kind of spoil this fact.
Because that's my gel in this podcast.
So I looked at all the other potato museums around the world to see if they had one.
There are surprisingly quite a few.
There are quite a few.
But I found in the Idaho potato museum, they have the world's largest Pringle.
And we have perhaps a Pringles controversy with this.
A further, a further.
A further, because you weren't here when Sarah Pasco was on,
but she had five Pringles controversies.
Yes.
But this is the world's largest Pringle, but it's flat.
Oh, it's not the shape of a Pringle.
So do you call that a Pringle?
Was it made by Pringles?
It was made by Pringles.
Yeah.
Is it made from the material of Pringle?
It's made from the hydrogenated potato starch.
Potato starch.
It's just not got the shape.
That's interesting.
What makes a Pringle?
Is it the shape?
Do you reckon it's a Pringle if it's not Pringle shaped?
I think if it's made by Pringles, it's a Pringle.
Do you?
What about the box that was made by Pringles?
No.
The box is also a Pringle.
It's a cylindrical Pringle.
Very doctrinally.
I'm going to double down on this.
Okay, fine.
Sadly, I do agree.
I think it is a Pringle.
If they say it's a, I think they have name rights.
So I can't call it a Pringles controversy.
Oh, well, I think we've certainly argued about it just now.
Exactly.
It's controversial that you're trying to introduce it as a controversy.
Certainly.
Okay, great.
I'll email Sarah.

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I did find out about the world's another non-largest potato in the world.

Yeah.

And this was, you may well have seen this in your research as well, which was nearly a knockout blow to Peter Glaesbrook's Five Kilo Potato, which is, I think, about an eight kilo potato.

Whoa.

Yeah.

It was found by a pair of farmers in New Zealand who, the Guinness World Records people, wrote back to them when they wrote in saying, we've got this.

They said, in fact, it's a tuber of a kind of gourd.

DNA testing actually revealed in true Jerry Springer style.

Wow.

It wasn't a potato.

It wasn't a potato at all.

It was called Doug.

That's great.

After how they got it out of the grave.

Doug.

Samantha Baldwin, who's a researcher at the New Zealand Institute for Food and Plant Research, presumably having a morning off or something.

So we tried running multiple tests on samples of Doug, but he just wasn't behaving like a potato should.

Because he wasn't a potato.

I like the idea of vegetable espionage, though, like posing as a potato for many, many years.

I mean, it looks like a potato.

And the finders, they made a little trolley to drag it around on.

It's quite sweet.

I have a couple more contenders for giant potatoes.

Oh, go on.

So I was a little bit concerned when I was double checking that there was a giant potato in Cyprus, which was two foot taller.

But sadly, or luckily for me, was chopped down by Vandals.

I wasn't me who did it.

Was it just done this week?

Yeah.

Really?

Just after you set this up?

Yeah.

Real suspicious.

Yeah.

And you look so gleeful at the moment.

I mean, no jury would have quit you at the moment.

I can't walk out if you're sad or, yeah, if you're hysterical.

I'm very sad.

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I don't know.

So there's the one inside for us was two foot taller, but it's been...

You're not doing a good impression of someone who hasn't chopped down a giant potato.

Put it that way.

Well, I definitely didn't chop down the one in Australia.

So they have the big things, I'm sure.

Yeah, of course.

And they have the big potato.

But theirs is lying down, so it's long.

Is someone knocking over?

It did for a while have a face, which is sort of mildly terrifying.

And the face has been taken away.

I'm not sure if it was stolen.

Wow.

Any more for potatoes?

No.

How about Prince Edward Island?

Well, they do.

They make about a million tons of potatoes each year.

They're big, big potatoes.

A quarter of Canada's potatoes, despite it being a very small Canadian province.

Yeah, one of the smallest, I would say.

A lot of the potatoes on Prince Edward Island are grown and processed by McCain, who are the world's largest manufacturer of frozen potato products.

You will know them from their oven chips.

Yes, big fans.

They were founded by two brothers called Harrison and Wallace McCain.

And like it seems, every single company that's founded by two brothers,

they got into a massive legal dispute,

and then one of the brothers had to leave and took over a thing called Maple Leaf Foods.

No, rivals.

Amazing.

I thought you were going to say there's a potato equator around the world, like the Eldie Brothers.

Yeah.

But no, isn't that surprising?

That is bizarre.

It does seem this thing that brothers start companies and they fall out.

Was it Adidas?

Adidas.

Yeah.

And Puma, yeah.

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

And right twigs and left wigs.

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Wow.

And Oasis.

Oasis, yeah.

Yeah.

So it's a very big island as well.

It's 175 miles long.

I'm going to say it was a small one.

It's the smallest province.

It's a small province, but it's a big island.

Right.

You know what I mean?

Yeah.

Because Canada's massive.

Canada's, I think everyone forgets how big Canada is.

Just shout out for Canada there.

But did you know we have a lot of listeners on Prince Edward Island?

Do we?

Do we?

So I had a little look in the inbox, the fish inbox, podcast at qi.com.

We have had so many messages from people over the years saying,

I'm on Prince Edward Island and I would like you to cover it.

And here are some facts.

OK.

So I've got a couple for you.

Right.

I've got a friend, Barrett, who works for the PEI Potato Board.

Wow.

Thank you.

Big shout out to him.

Big shout out to him.

Yeah.

I mean, he wrote an email a couple of years ago.

This was when Anna was in charge of the inbox.

Right.

And I don't think you've got to reply.

So I'm going to write that one.

Anna really hates Prince Edward Island.

Every week she goes on about how much she hates it.

Have to cut it out.

He just said some cool place names they've got.

They've got an Alaska, a Belfast, a New Zealand, a Toronto, a Norway,

a Crapo, which is French for toad, I didn't know,

and a Surice, which is French for mouse.

Oh, yeah.

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And he also has a fact about Anne of Green Gables, which is that because of Anne of Green Gables, Prince Edward Island gets thousands and thousands of Japanese tourists every year. And that's because the book was the first book taught in English in Japan after the Second World War. It's massive. So big cultural influence. Yeah, still. Yeah, still to this day. It's ginormous. And they have schools named after it. They're the School of Green Gables. They've got the University of Prince Edward Island School of Nursing. And apparently adaptations are just always on TV, just nonstop on TV in Japan. I've always heard that. I never really understood why. And I read a really cool article by Margaret Atwood to celebrate Anne's 100th birthday. And she said she'd done an event in Japan and she'd asked the audience and her translator had written down the responses. And one of the big reasons is the author who translated it in Japan was already very beloved, so sort of had an audience there. And there are many things about the book that just really resonated. So Anne was an orphan. And there were sadly a lot of orphans in Japan after the war. She's got a huge passion for Apple Blossom and Cherry Blossom, which is very popular in Japan. And the sort of her work ethic, like she's not scared of hard work and she's very thoughtful, but she's also quite forgetful. But it's because she's daydreaming. She's not lazy. She tries to do her best and she does wind up in scrapes, but it's never, she means well. I did read one place that said that America kind of pushed Anne of Green Gables after the war because they thought it would help. Kind of as American liberal propaganda. And they thought that this kind of book, which showed that women were more free thinking, might get them away from some of their old ideas. So that was supposedly one of the reasons.

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She sounds like a pretty cool character.
The author Lucy Maud Montgomery.
When she was a kid, she had two imaginary friends,
which is really cool.
She was at her grandparents house and they had a bookcase
and it had glass reflection doors on the bookcase
and she could see herself in the reflection.
So the one on the left was a reflection of someone that she called Katie Maurice
and the right was Lucy Gray.
And it was both her, both her reflections,
but she created them as her imaginary friends.
Yeah, very cool idea.
And I love that her titles of her books all sound like she's still workshopping,
the author of the title.
This is Emily of New Moon, Pat of Silver Bush,
Kill Many of the Orchard.
One more to add to that.
So there's six in the Anne of series
and then there are two that focus on her children.
And the second one is Rilla of Ingleside,
which is her youngest daughter.
So spoiler alert, she goes up to get married
and has a bunch of children.
But what I didn't realize when I was younger is I followed the books through
and you see her grow up.
And I hadn't clocked that as she grew up,
the year would get so much closer to the war.
So it becomes a book about the First World War.
So Rilla of Ingleside is about war coming to Canada,
which I wasn't expecting.
And so two of her children end up fighting in the war.
Her daughter Rilla ends up adopting a war baby and looking after him.
And it's just very odd to take a character who you know from a beloved children's book
and put them in World War One.
I think this about is a slightly different example of it.
But there is an episode of Frasier where Martin Crane, Frasier's dad,
has just watched the Austin Powers film.
And it's very weird thinking of them in the same conceptual universe
because there's a bit where Martin keeps on saying,
oh, it's a good electric baby. Yeah.
And it really takes you out of yourself.
It's quite amazing that she gave over the trademark basically to Anna Green Gables
to not only her daughters and the heirs,
but to Prince Edward Island as well.

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So they've got the trademark,
which means that anyone who works on the island
is allowed to make their own sort of products or merchandise and sell them.

Yeah, with no worry of the estate coming at them
because they are the estate.

Wow, can you do anything?

It sounds like it.

You don't have to pitch and say, you know,
you couldn't have Anna Green Gables, for instance.

Oh, yes. The second World War book.

Yeah.

OK, it is time for fact number two.

And that is my fact.

My fact this week is in 1952,

a cowboy successfully lassoed a plane as it flew past his house.

His house.

Yeah. So he was working at this house.

He was working with his boss.

Yeah.

Successfully lassoed. Yeah.

Does that mean he got the lasso around the plane
and then the plane flew off with his lasso attack?

He tamed it. He tamed it.

Yeah, yeah. He ended up riding the plane.

He broke it, you know, he made it submissive to him.

That's Andy's got it right.

And the plane lives happily in his garden to this day.

Yeah.

No, this is the basic story is that he was at this house.

He was working as a cowboy

and this plane just kept flying really low over the house

and kept going by and had no idea what was going on.

It turns out what was going on was the pilot on the inside

was trying to drop a love letter to a girl who lived inside the house

and flying Kai, he was trying to get her to come out

to see the love letter being dropped.

Right.

But this cowboy gets pissed off.

So he gets out his lasso.

It's a three and a half meter long lasso.

And as the guy is sleeping,

he's got to drop the letter so it lands on a good spot.

Absolutely.

So he throws the lasso at the plane.

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It manages to collide with the propeller,
catches onto it and snaps off
and gets tangled up in the propeller.
So the pilot has no choice but to turn around
and quickly land the plane.
Obviously the cowboy was knocked onto his back.
It was not pleasant.
Did the guy in the plane survive?
Yeah, he did.
And actually years later when he was 78 years old,
there was a photo of him with the propeller
with the lasso rope still wrapped around it.
Wow.
And did he get the girl?
I couldn't find that bit of the story.
Great question.
Yeah, great question.
Can I just say everyone in the story is an idiot.
Not the girl.
Why isn't she coming out of her house?
How would she know to come out?
There's a plane flying apparently two meters
above your house.
Show some curiosity.
Like she's an idiot three on the list.
Idiot two, I think is probably the pilot
who's doing this magic.
Just send the card.
It doesn't matter.
Idiot one's the cowboy.
Why?
He could have killed the pilot and himself.
But it's a good point though.
I felt sorry for the pilot.
I thought he's trying to do something in secret.
Instead his plane's fallen out of the sky
and made a big noise presumably.
But the post is pretty secret.
Yeah, this is not secret.
This is less secret, I would say, than the post.
It's not secret.
He's not trying to be secret.
This is romance.
Look, you can see me.

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Hi, I've got a letter.

I want to show you my love.

Is it like the 80s thing of turning up outside the house with a boom box?

I was just thinking.

Or the love actually thing of turning up with the cards.

It's exactly that.

I would be good in love actually.

That scene for Lasso just came in for the second.

Yeah.

Or if he's going round to loop the loop with a plane and every time he does the bottom of the loop, it's another card.

Oh yeah.

Sorry, forgot to say.

Yeah.

No.

Yeah, fools.

It's a great story.

It's a very random story.

It appeared in a Time Magazine article in a language that is just, it says like, then a few years ago some smart fellas bought themselves a little airplane and opened a flying club just a hood and a holler from where the ranch cowboy.

This is Time Magazine.

This is how they're reporting the story.

So yeah.

Okay.

50s journalism.

Yeah.

His name was Euclides Guterres.

Is how I'm going to pronounce that.

Who's that?

That's the cowboy.

That's the cowboy.

Yeah.

It's south.

Again, so little detail about the story.

It's the South Brazilian cattle ranches.

So I don't even think this is an American cowboy.

Oh, I see.

We're talking.

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Oh, I thought we were in the USA.

That's what I initially thought.

I thought we were in Brazil.

Ancient Greece from his name.

Yeah.

Um, just on lassoes.

Yeah.

And lassoing things.

Um, I did find someone who lassoed cats.

Oh.

This was a cat lasso artist from the Sakuma War.

She was called Miss Iris Davis.

It's a really nice story actually.

So lots of buildings being, uh, bombed in Sakuma War.

Lots of rubble, lots of, you know, ruins and things.

Also lots of cats, lots of people keeping cats.

And she was a volunteer worker for what something called the dumb friends league.

Which is.

Friends of cats.

Exactly.

Dumb as in, I think they don't speak rather than stupid cats.

Um, but she went from, she went from bombed house to bombed house with a cat lasso.

It was a very long pole with the lasso at the end, rescuing cats from the wreckage.

Can I ask, Andy, you know, um, lots of planes flying very low there, dropping bombs and stuff.

Do you think a curious person would get out of the house and look up and go, what's going on there?

Idiots.

No, no, no, no.

Sorry.

She claimed in 1940, November 1940.

So I guess the blitz had been going on for a while.

She claimed she had rescued 600 cats from bomb buildings, which is a lot.

Knowing cats, it was probably the same one.

Someone who's an unexpected cowboy.

Osama bin Laden turns out he used to walk around with a Stetson on his favorite shows were bonanza and things like fury.

He had his own horse and he absolutely loved the world of cowboys.

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Um, yeah, there was lots of stories because a biography came out where they said you would see Osama bin Laden walking around with his Stetson on acting all cowboy.

It's amazing.

It took that long to find and catch him, given that he was there.

There can't be that many people in the Torah barricades with a massive Stetson.

Wow.

I don't know what to make of that.

I know it's odd, isn't it?

But there's a lot of, um, so like Stalin, for example, if we're talking like bad people generally, massive cowboy fan as well.

He used to love watching Westerns, love John Wayne movies, but also hated John Wayne because of his anti-communism stance.

And so actually plotted to have him murdered.

He ordered KGB assassins to go and try and kill John Wayne.

Um, and, and Chairman Mao did that as well.

Chairman Mao hated John Wayne, the stories of assassination plot from, yeah, from Chairman Mao as well.

Oh, these all put out by John Wayne's PR language.

It feels like it, right?

Communists, dictators hate him.

Find this one weird trick.

There's a really good, there's a Hollywood writer called Munn.

I've read a couple of his books.

It's one that he did on John Wayne.

He found that the FBI had discovered that there were assassins that were sent to Hollywood to try and kill John Wayne.

Amazing.

Yeah.

Gosh.

Do you know how many people you can fit inside a lesser?

Oh.

Surely, do you have enough rope?

Well, the Guinness World Record for someone who's done it.

So it has to be spinning.

Oh, yeah.

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Was it thrown there?

Yeah, yeah.

So it's like, it's spinning.

He's like, I would say actually it's smaller than anything.

I'm going to say 20 people gathered in a tight, as in that'll be very hard, I think, to let's do 20 people standing, even standing together.

I'm going to say, just going with my imagination here, I'm going to say 200 and I'm going to say that the person was standing on top of a first floor building, like the top of a school, massive lasso and just managed to get the, the throw.

A school, specifically a school.

Then no other buildings have more than one story, as we know.

Yeah.

What I'm thinking maybe is maybe around 240 to 300.

And they're all on the same plane and it gets lassoed.

Yeah.

Very nice.

Well, you actually write the first time, it's 13 or 14, including the guy handling it.

So close.

So he counts.

It sort of does he count.

The guy throwing the rope.

He jumped in.

He's in the centre and he's a lassoing around and other people are gathering around him as he lassoes.

Yeah, I love that.

Does that count as lassoing because you don't usually stand say like next to the wild horse and lasso yourself into it as well.

They do tricks and they lasso artists and I think this is kind of part of that as in they like a skipping rope.

You're kind of lasso around and then you'll do jumping.

You're going to get lettuce from the cowboys and the skipping people.

How dare you associate with those hacks?

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I'll tell you what, if someone flies very close to the top of my house, then I'll look outside for the lettuce.

Yeah.

Marlboro man.

One of the most famous cowboys.

Cigarette.

Marlboro man.

Yeah, Bob Norris was the original Marlboro man who never smoked cigarettes in his life.

He actively was anti it, but he was found because he was in a photo with John Wayne, who used to smoke seven packs a day and they saw him in that shot and went, hey, that guy looks like he'd be good for our smoking.

Weirdly, he'd actually been hired by Stalin to kill Wayne.

And then the film people got to him in time, the cigarette people.

I was looking at other big animals that you can lasso.

Do you know how many lettuce it takes to get a crocodile safely?

I would have said one.

I would have said one.

Round the mouth.

I'm going to say three.

Three.

Point to the driver.

So apparently the way they do it is they lasso the top bit of the mouth and they do it again with a second lasso.

I guess that's the most like scary part.

And then they do one round the whole mouth and then they tape the mouth to be so, so, so sure.

And then the advice was if it all goes pear shaped, run.

I was going to say that's a lot of detail to get right three times round.

We get the clippers sometimes to go to our gigs and then you have to sit up the creek and whenever the boat comes in, they always have to lasso the boat.

And I always have a bet with whoever I'm standing with, are they going to get it on the first go?

Sometimes at the third go, but the thing is the

dock's not going to eat you.
Whereas a crocodile, yeah, that's a fine time.
That's one of the first QI facts I ever learned was
that a crocodile can, what is it?
It can bite you with the force of a truck falling
off a cliff.
But once his mouth is closed, it presents no
threat at all because you can hold its mouth
shut with your hand.
That's a rubber band, even just a rubber band.
I think the scariest job is the person who takes
the tape off at the end of the procedure.
I think that's the real hero.
At that point it's quite annoyed probably.
Exactly, yeah.
Have you ever held a crocodile?
No.
No, me either.
But my wife has, my wife has.
I thought we were on the brink of an amazing
Jane's story.
No, it's not.
Yeah, we went to the Everglades and there was
a baby crocodile that you could hold called
Snappy.
Of course.
And Polina held it and I didn't have the guts
to hold it.
How big was Snappy?
How big were you talking?
I would say about a foot and a half.
Okay.
Something like that.
Wow.
That's amazing.
I also did once, played mini golf in a place that
had crocodiles sort of roaming around.
Oh, yes, yeah.
There's that one golf course where the lake
literally has giant snapping crocodiles,
which is amazing.
You just have to stay away from them basically.
Yeah.
Okay, we're in London now.

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We are.

Right?

Yeah, no crocodiles.

But some cowboys quite near here, there is a secret cowboy town in the middle of Kent.

Have you heard of it?

Really?

Yeah.

It's called Laredo.

It was founded in 1971.

What?

And they've got a blacksmith.

They've got an undertaker, a tobacconist.

Like a working Israeli models?

It's life-size and it's kind of functional.

So it was founded by a bloke called John Trudeau who was a pig farmer and he just loved the Wild West and he just wanted to recreate the Wild West in his corner of Kent.

It's members only and they go there at weekends and they recreate life in the Old West.

Cool.

Yeah, you can get a half an hour train from London and arrive in Laredo.

And they won't let you in.

They won't let you in.

No, no.

There's like a random Wild West in Morningside in Edinburgh.

Like it's just you go like through an archway and it's just a Wild West like behind a bank and some flats.

It's just there.

I read about it.

It was created by a furniture shop.

For some reason it's called the Great American Indoors, the shop.

And they made their own.

Yeah, it's not advertised.

Seven was everything in the Wild West and you'd be like, no, we're in Scotland.

And they'd say, oh, it's just over there.

And you go and look.

That's so weird.

And that one you can just walk into.

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It's just like behind some flats.

Yeah.

Does the piano player always stop whenever there's someone?

No, but there's like always these planes coming down with ropes.

It's very strange.

OK, it is time for fact number three.

And that is James.

OK, my fact this week is that one of the best ways to trick puffins to a new nesting ground is with mirrors because they like to be in groups and can't tell the difference between a puffin and the reflection of a puffin.

So they fail the mirror test.

They don't know that they are.

The mirror test is a thing with animals that some animals, if you show them a reflection of themselves and put a little mark on the head, they'll realize that it's them and they'll try and wipe it off.

Yeah.

Whereas most animals won't do that.

They won't see.

They'll see a mirror image of themselves and think it's another animal.

And in fact, humans and my daughter only did it a few weeks ago and she's walked 40 months.

So it's until that age is the first time you get to do that.

So babies don't know it either.

But this is all about a guy called Stephen Kress.

And he was working about trying to get puffins into a new area.

In fact, they've been in that area before, but he wanted to get them back into that area on the east coast of America.

And one of the ways that he did that was by making these decoys.

You can make actual decoys of little puffins.

But one good way of doing it is mirrors because you can get multiple puffins.

Oh, yeah.

Hall of mirrors, like kaleidoscope stuff.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Unfortunately, they saw someone that were really tall, someone that were really tall.

Yeah.

This mission he was on because Stephen Kress, it sounds like

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a great guy.

He's been working on this for about 30 years, 40 years.

It's 1969.

It's a long career in puffinology.

So he and his colleagues, they went to a breeding colony which was healthy in Newfoundland, just in Canada.

And they basically had to kidnap loads of baby puffins.

Yeah.

The start of the story is a bit dodgy, isn't it?

It's a real villain to hero arc.

I think he and his colleagues went on because they started off as puffing kid mappers.

At the start, people are just like, what are you doing?

Yeah, exactly.

Just killing all those puffins.

They shoved them in soup cans, which I like, to transport them all the way to their new home.

But then there's the twist, the character twist, where he and his colleagues became puffin nannies looking after them, breeding them up on this new island in Maine.

And they put them in these fake burrows, which they had dug.

Right.

And they fed them, they left fish in there, and he constructed all these decoy puffins.

And then the thing is that the puffins go to sea eventually when they become kind of teenagers.

They gain their independence.

They go off and then he waited for years hoping they would come back to the island.

Because the question is, would they go back to Newfoundland where their kind of genes say that they should be living?

Or will they remember where they lived as babies and then come back to that place?

And in the end?

In the end they came back.

But I think only in the third year, it was a few years before they did, and he was getting really worried.

And then eventually he built loads of decoys and that kind of lured them back.

Right.

That's very cool.

I was reading about puffins' Ministry of Silly Walks.

So when they want to show that they're not any...

Because they live quite close together.

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They live in burrows.

And so if you want to cross across, you'll probably cross lots of other territories.

And if you don't want to start a fight, they do this like, hey, don't mind me walk.

Where they lower their heads and they sort of walk quite quickly and try not to get noticed.

But if they're on guard duty, they'll stand outside their burrows nice and tall and they'll sort of stamp their feet like an exaggerated guard doing a march.

Wow.

That's really like the idea of like, I'm on patrol.

And don't mind me.

Just over here.

That's great.

And they take over rabbit burrows as well.

I love that they don't even need to just dig their own burrows.

They're just, yeah.

They can make their own burrows if they want to.

And actually sometimes rabbits take their burrows.

There's a whole little ecosystem going on there.

I went to the Isle of May a few years ago, which is off the east coast of Scotland.

And you've got tons and tons of seabirds, loads of puffins.

And there's certain bits where like you cannot stray off the path because the island is just covered in puffin burrows.

So you've got to walk on the bits that they know are safe, which is really cool.

Back to Steven Kress very quickly.

He had a big problem with gulls.

Sea gulls would attack the puffins.

Because sea gulls had been living in this area long before the puffins came back.

So he tried a few different things.

He attracted turns, which are like bigger than puffins, but smaller than gulls.

And they'll kind of attack the gulls to stop them from coming in there.

And he also had a thing called a death sandwich, which is where his arc of being the evil puffin thief.

And then the nice puffin nurse.

Then at the end he becomes the gull killer.

Because he puts these death sandwiches, which is some bread with something called starlicide in.

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And starlicide is a chemical,
which is really toxic to starlings and seagulls,
but not toxic to any other animals.
He would put those out, which would kill the seagulls.
Where's his arc sitting now?
I think it's good.
If we were doing a fact about gulls, it's not good.
Exactly, but we're not.
We're doing a fact about puffins.
Sorry, my fact this weekend is the evil gull killer,
Steven Kress.
And there are still, I think there are still puffiniers,
as they call themselves, who have to go to the island
to keep it healthy for the puffins
and prevent the gulls from taking root there.
And they have to smash up their nests.
And they also, I love this, they have a robot mannequin,
which is dressed in a yellow coat
and an Arnold Schwarzenegger mask.
And they inflate that.
I know, it sounds terrifying.
And they inflate that to try and scare off the gulls.
It's a scarecrow, basically.
But the only problem is that the gulls
will eventually realize this is a motionless,
it's not an effective, scary thing.
It just sits there, doesn't do anything.
So sometimes what the puffiniers will have to do is,
they will have to dress up,
they have to put on the yellow coat and the mask
and then go around shooting gulls on the island
to prove that it's a dangerous thing.
So the gulls realize what they're doing.
I just can't help thinking,
what if Arnold Schwarzenegger books a nice relaxing break
to look at some puffins?
The island's off the coast of Maine, lovely.
Jesus.
No.
That's bad.
But that's what it takes to get puffins up and running again.
I'm all for it.
I think there's a lot of gray areas,
I'm looking after puffins,

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because I was reading about there's some,
the numbers are declining very sadly,
and there's some concerns that perhaps
it's the food they're eating,
they're not getting the right fish,
the fish are getting smaller.
And there's one study where to do this,
they would put up a massive net to catch a puffin
and then take all its fish off them to examine the fish.
Doesn't say whether they gave the fish back.
Yeah, yeah, yeah.
Their fishing is amazing,
because often they will have sort of depleted the area
that's closest to an island where they're fishing,
and so they have to go on these huge journeys
in order to get the fish to bring back for their starving kids
who eat like four or five times a day.
And I watched this footage, it's amazing,
it was a David Attenborough, Planet Earth,
they fly 50 kilometers out to sea,
50 kilometers is a whole group of them that just go in one go,
they dive down into the ocean,
and they have an amazing swimming ability,
they can swim for up to a minute holding their breath,
and they use their wings,
like we would use our arms if we were doing front crawl,
as they make their way, they can go 40 meters deep,
they come back up when they've caught a fish,
it's just one fish in most cases in this footage,
they fly them back 50 kilometers again,
and then when they get there, very similar to the gulls.
All the kids don't want to eat it.
No, they don't want to eat it.
No, I have fish yesterday.
There are birds which are called optic skewers
who are waiting for them as they come back,
knackered, and they swoop down,
and they steal the fish off them.
It's amazing shot in this Planet Earth documentary,
because suddenly one of them gets back,
because a guy wearing an Arnold Schwarzenegger mask
is suddenly shooting.
No, that doesn't happen, but 100 kilometer round trip,
and then the skewers come for one fish.

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Are the skewers, they're sort of famously pirate birds, aren't they?

I think I might be making this up,
do they squeeze other birds to make them vomit up
whatever they've just eaten?

They're definitely villains.

So that might be skewers, yeah.

There is a bird that does that, yeah.

The thing with skewers, well, you pronounce them skewers.

Skewers, skewers, skewers.

The buffins can carry more than one fish,
because they have skewers on their tongue, don't they?

They have spiky bits on their tongue
that they can attach one fish onto each spike
and then go down for another one.

But if they get attacked, that's a skewer's crisis, you know?

Brilliant.

How lovely. Thank you.

One thing they're so good at swimming is their bones are dense
and other birds, they find it easy to swim,
but they can find it harder to fly.

So did you read about these puffin patrols they have in Iceland?

These are definitely good guys, not a grey area for these ones.

So basically when the little pufflings, the baby ones,
they use the moon to navigate,

but the streetlights come through them off,
so they sort of crash land in the town.

And so the whole town is basically united
to save these pufflings.

They go out on patrol, they try and find them,
and if you find a puffling, you have to look after it,
so they'll take them to the cliff,
so they can trot along and catch the breeze,
or you just lob it into the air and hope it takes flight.

You lob it into the air in the hope?

Yeah, because they need to get the momentum to get up
if it sprays.

But you're catching it if it doesn't, right?

No, it's going off a cliff.

What if it sprained its wing?

Hopefully you checked that on the way in.

I don't know.

I don't think these guys sound like an uncomplicatedly benevolent force.

Why don't they turn their streetlights off?

That's what a real good guy would do.

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I feel like the terminal velocity of a puffin would agree fast enough that they would die. I think they might be all right, because they're quite small, aren't they? They're really tiny. If it's the babies as well, then they'll have a really low terminal velocity. Maybe. You can survive. Like, didn't Gordon Ramsay fall off a cliff when he was looking for puffers? Well, the thing about Gordon Ramsay is his terminal velocity is famously low, isn't it? Yeah, yeah, yeah. 85 feet, I think, once he fell off a cliff. I imagine when he falls, he's got lots of flapping skin on his body and that kind of, yeah. He turns into one of those gliding parachuters. Sorry, why'd Gordon Ramsay fall off a cliff when he was looking for puffins? Do you know what? This is a story just in the back of my head. I'm gonna connect it to puffins. He was doing a documentary and he was looking at the various islands. He was on the side of a cliff and they were filming him and he just disappeared. He fell 80 feet. Yeah, and he fell down and he survived. I don't believe that. It's true, is it? Yeah. I think Gordon Ramsay is an honourable guy. I don't see why he would lie. Presumably, it's some film. I think they never released it. Oh, they accidentally turned off the film before he fell 80 feet and survived. 85, 85. 85. What's that? It's 25 metres. Survival.

It must have been a big patch of heather
he landed on, or whatever it was.
It's a big pile of other TV chefs.
Previously fallen down there.
Bounced off of Warrell Thompson.
Fortunately for him.
There's a thing which a lot of people say
about puffins, which is that they're monogamous.
You know, they have the same partner every year
and that's very nice.
Well, it turns out I think it is actually true
because a load of birds, it's not true.
Yeah.
And they study EPCs, extra pair copulations.
That's the...
Do you remember?
I think we've mentioned this once or twice before.
But they did a study of Atlantic puffins
looking at extra pair parentage
because now we've got DNA tests.
We can actually sample species.
And they are basically monogamous.
They are...
Good for them.
I know.
So, you know, no grey areas there.
It's a nice simple...
No Jerry Springer in the...
No Jerry Springer.
Every DNA test comes back.
Yep, it's all fine.
You are the father.
Great news.
Yeah.
My current favourite puffin fact is that
there is scientists creating sunglasses for puffins.
Okay.
Because I don't know how this happened
but they had a puffin and they realised
that it's beak lit up under UV light.
Okay.
But the puffin was no longer alive.
So they're not completely sure if it's some sort of
the way it decomposes or whether all puffins do this.

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So to test it, they need to get some alive puffins on UV on them.
But that could hurt their eyes.
They've got to design little sunglasses to amuse themselves.
They've made them aviators.
Okay.
Cool.
What did they find?
Was it...
I believe still pending.
Still pending.
Find a puffin, give it the sunglasses, shine the light and then report back.
Because their beaks do change a lot, right?
There's an outer beak that falls off the colour changes at different seasons.
The beak falls off in winter.
It's crazy.
And it leaves them with what I found described in one article as a drab grey pecker.
My old Tinder profile.
That's amazing.
I know.
Young puffins are just completely grey.
Yeah.
They sound so boring.
Yeah.
Just grey all the way through.
Grey beak, grey everything.
I always thought that was your favourite fact of all time.
It was one of my very, very first facts I ever found for a QI.
Which one?
That a baby puffin is called a puffling.
Yeah.
But now puffins are...
I don't know if you've noticed.
They are on everything.
Puffins are everywhere now.
So many kids books about pufflings.
And someone I know who works in publishing used to keep a list of like which animals were like on trend.
So you will have noticed it in me without realising.

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For a while it was sloths.

They were on everything.

Oh yeah.

It was flamingos for a while.

Llamas used to have a phase where they were on everything.

Oh yeah.

And I think puffins.

Isn't it like children's books?

Yeah.

Just like also in like paper chase or like on clothing.

You can just notice it.

Mirror cats were massive.

Yeah.

Certain animals seem to like have their moment.

How interesting.

And I'm not quite sure why or how but they do.

But it's never the disgusting toad worm is it?

He could be spring 2024 aren't they?

Never the penis worm is it?

Yes.

And do you feel slightly responsible for that?

Because I think you're partly responsible for disseminating the adorable puffling fact.

Pufflings.

Because that fact has come out of various different QI iterations over the years.

I do put it in a lot of things.

Exactly.

Yeah.

No, in reality tons of puffling stuff out there.

They're super cute.

You used to get enormous flocks of puffins didn't you?

In the UK as well.

Really?

So the island of St. Kilda.

This was two people called Hertha and Dunn in 1897.

And they said that the puffins are in such numbers the clouds of birds sweep past us and make a sound like a whirlwind.

Cool.

And another one said that it was it made a great cloud that perceptively interfered with a light of day and that parasites fell off the birds as they swarmed over us much to our discomfort and annoyance.

So you can imagine there's like millions of these birds just blocking out the sun and flying over you and dropping the ticks on you and stuff.

Yeah.

That's really incredible.

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Very cool.

In St. Kilda there was one man who caught 620 puffins in a single day.

Let's use them.

Yeah.

Using a noose.

No rod.

No way.

Sorry to jump in on you there.

No, no.

I didn't expect it was going to be that.

Wow.

Yeah.

Pretty much a lasso.

That's what they used to use.

Like these sort of like fishing rods but with a bit of rope on the end.

Yeah.

That's what this cat lady was using in the second mobile.

Oh yeah.

Yeah.

Wow.

That's very cool.

That's amazing.

There are some places where the puffins are eaten aren't there?

Iceland.

The Faroe Islands.

Yeah.

Am I allowed to say I've eaten them in Iceland?

Have you?

Have you?

What did it taste like?

It was a long time ago.

Oh, it was the 80s.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

What about like a go?

What did it taste like?

Just to me, I thought it just tasted like fishy, oily, not chicken but like.

More like fish than like meat.

Quail-y kind of stuff.

Like gamey, fishy, chicken.

It's a gray area.

Why is that gray area?

No, I guess everything we're saying about the puffins is sort of like, you know, you've got to kill them to save them.

As they're being, they're much more endangered than they used to be.

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Yeah.

So you have to.

Certainly back in the day when I was eating puffin that one time, they were, they were all over them.

You couldn't move.

You were on some, you were on some kill though, weren't you?

And the skies were thick with them.

You were actually doing the world a favor.

Yeah, yeah.

I was so hoping that when you were grasping for what they tasted like, you're going to be like, a bit like panda.

Like cacopo taste to them.

But that's, I mean, lots of places eat, people eat meat and people eat the meats that are close to them.

Exactly.

But if a particular meat is endangered, then you'd change.

Exactly.

There was a whale on the menu, which I didn't eat.

Wow.

Does that help my arc at all?

Oh, yeah.

Oh, yeah.

Okay, it is time for our final fact of the show, and that is Andy.

My fact is that trash talk works better on dance players than shot putters.

Call that a fact.

There you go.

It begins.

It begins.

I should have known when I picked this fact.

Idiot.

That's brilliant.

Yeah.

Study of trash talk.

Why would that be true?

Well, this comes from a piece in The Economist, and it's all about sledging, which is cricket-based trash talk.

And, you know, sporting insults, basically.

You dish out to people you're in a competition against, and it found that there have been studies conducted which have found that trash talk is especially effective at distracting players if you're in a sport that needs fine motor skills or creativity, rather than brute strength exhibitions.

Okay.

So sports where you need to concentrate are much more vulnerable, which is why maybe cricket is vulnerable to lots of trash talk.

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Chess?

Chess?

You don't see a lot of smack talk in chess.

Yeah.

But you get loads and, I mean, it's weird because lots of sports have different tolerances on it.

You know, so cricket has loads of it.

Boxing has loads of it, although you shouldn't need to do any trash talk because you're trying to hit someone hard anyway.

No, it's psychological.

The whole thing is a psychological warfare, right?

And it's very skilful sport boxing, I would say.

Is it?

Yeah.

I just thought you'd baster the other bloke, didn't you?

Well, that's one way of doing it.

Whatever.

If you're a really good boxer, it's all about...

Is this why my boxing career didn't...

Saw like a puppet.

I thought it was like a giant potato.

Oh, no.

Yeah, no, that's a really good point.

In chess, I guess, there is a lot of psychological stuff goes on, but it's not necessarily...

It's not normally...

Your shit.

You suck.

Yeah, your shit.

Yeah.

In basketball, it's a big thing.

And I grew up watching basketball, so you would always see it happening.

It's amazing when you see it happening, trash talking between the sort of top players in the league.

Are they better at it?

No, they're sort of...

It's just interesting watching them because they're all on mic, right?

Basically...

I think...

The likes of the studio, it comes through, you know?

They hear them saying like, oh...

Yeah, exactly, you hear things.

So like...

Yeah, well, Shaquille O'Neal was up against...

So, Shaquille O'Neal, one of the all-time greats of basketball, against Kobe Bryant,

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who was also one of the other.

Yeah.

And he was overheard saying, Kobe, tell me how my ass tastes as he was about to dunk on him, right?

Like, they say...

What does that mean?

You don't play him.

Dunk on him is fantastic.

Dunking is when you bring the ball into the ring and you hold the ring kind of thing.

Oh, why is he tasting his ass when he does that?

Because he's going so high that the face of Kobe would be...

And then...

And then there's this thing in basketball where then you make someone taste your ass after...

Got it?

Yeah, that's a good point.

Every day's a school day.

In off the rim?

Sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry.

One thing they did with this...

With this research you're talking about is they sat people at computers and you had to move a slider to a particular spot and see how many you could do in two minutes.

And as you did it, a little message would come up on your screen supposedly from one of the other people doing the experiment and it would either say, I'm smarter and faster than you or let's see what happens.

Hi, friend.

And they found actually that people who got the negative messages performed better overall in that one.

I think this could spur you on.

You think I'm going to lose?

Well, I'll just show you.

Yeah, absolutely.

And that's what seemed to have happened in that one.

But then they tried it in a task which was slightly more skill-creative-based and they found that people did worse and they were more likely to cheat.

Oh, yeah.

Turns it dirty, so you're like, well...

Yeah, exactly.

I think one of them might have been the study by Karen McDermott who was looking into this from the University of Connecticut and that involved people playing Mario Kart.

And before the game, some of the people were insulted with various things like grab a straw because you suck and so on.

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Yeah, I think she had to pick quite carefully because a lot of insults might be the homophobic or racist or sexist so she had to pick a carefully delineated selection of insults which were cruel enough to sting.
Grab a straw because you suck being one of them.
And the insulted players performed worse.
And they also rated themselves higher as having experienced anger and shame.
Oh, really?
Yeah.
But were they playing Rainbow Road?
If you're playing Rainbow Road, you always experience deep, deep shame and frustration and rage.
Yeah, yeah, yeah.
So, yeah, but does it make you play better or worse?
There seem to be slightly conflicting studies on whether it improves or not.
I read a lot of different ones.
And that's similar to what you were saying.
I also read, which I thought was a lovely point, that in a university study, you've got a university ethics code so what you can sledge someone with is kind of very different to what you can have like a whole stadium chanting at you in a basketball game.
Yeah.
Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.
I also like the weird social side of trash talking as well within professional sports, which is let's say a younger player trying to trash talk and create a relationship of conflict which would then be on the cameras and it's a way of social climbing.
So, like, Michael Jordan, for example, would never trash talk whenever he was having it talk to him by like a rookie from a new team because he thinks, I'll let my game do the talking and I don't want, I will make you famous by trash talking with you.
So let's not get that.
It's not worth it.
I think it's worth us saying off-menu as shit.
Yeah.
Chris and Rosie Ramsey.
Oh, Wankers.
Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.
Coating hell, fuck you.
Yeah, yeah.
There's no point saying, you know, John's podcast about nothing.
John's podcast about nothing is good, James.
I stand by.
I've been listening.

[Transcript] No Such Thing As A Fish / 481: No Such Thing As Taming A Plane

I get all my facts from John's podcast about nothing.

Shout out to John.

Hello, John.

One of my favorite sledges that I read was not so much a sledge, but as an AFL player called Stevie Baker, and apparently during a game, he leaned over to someone and said, have you got a sausage dog?

And they spent the next 20 minutes just being like, what?

What?

What?

And they couldn't play.

It was the worst insult they've heard.

But it turned out that Baker has a sausage dog.

He was just like...

I was just making chat.

Yeah.

But this guy was like, he couldn't focus on the game.

He's like, what's he saying?

Why do you...

Yeah.

I mean, well, it baffled me.

I've heard the phrase sausage dog before.

I know that is.

But because it was at a sporting match,

I was thinking of a hot dog.

Yeah.

And we're like, what's a sausage dog?

A hot dog is a sausage.

What are you talking about?

This is where I should swoop in and out fact you.

But I...

Yeah, sure.

It's all about distraction, isn't it, really, at the end of the day?

That's it.

It just reminds me, this isn't a fact,

but do you ever watch that episode of Cheers

when there was like a basketball player and he couldn't miss

and he was amazing and he was winning the whole season.

And then he went to the bar and started talking about trivia

with two of the bar flies, Norm and whoever else it was.

And they asked him how many rivets there were

in the basketball stadium.

And he just...

All he could think about for the rest of his career

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was counting these rivets.

And all he would do was walk around counting them.

He just couldn't play anymore because he was so discreet.

That happened to me in an exam once.

I was in an exam and he would always write on...

He's like, Rickety Old Desk.

You always call them an exam time.

And they always say like, I heart so and so,

or that maths is rubbish.

And I was sitting at one...

You always call it an episode of the Beano, didn't you?

I grew up in Dundee, yeah.

But I was sitting in my seat in my exam

and on my desk someone had written,

there were 32 black lines on the ceiling.

And so I look up and there are black lines

really close together, never seen them before.

So of course I had to count them and I lost count.

So I'd start again.

Wow.

Do you think that might have been written by a crafty teacher trying to smoke out, easily distract the children?

I think it was one person in your class wrote it and all the other desks, apart from their own,

I mean, they would be top of the class.

Yeah, she was waiting.

Yeah, that's good.

I'd forgotten that until now, but I can...

I remember trying to count them.

How did your exam...

You'll have still passed, I guess.

Played very badly.

I don't remember.

That's so funny.

I was looking because you were talking about darts and shot putting, some trash talking in those spots.

Oh, yeah.

And of course we can't not talk about Gary Anderson and Wesley Harms.

Of course we can't.

Thank God.

The amazing match when Harms, who lost 10-2, did an interview and said,

there was a fragrant smell that came from his opponent.

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And he said,
it'll take me two nights to lose the smell from my nose.

Wow.

And he claimed that Gary Anderson had been farting
throughout the match to put him off.

And then obviously they interview the loser first

and then they interview the winner

and they interviewed Gary Anderson

and he said,

why were you farting the whole time?

And he said, there was definitely a smell,

but it was 1,010%, not me.

It was definitely the other guy.

And Anderson said,

you can put your finger up my arse.

There'll be no smell there.

What?

What is it with this false man?

Yeah.

Okay.

I mean, I believe the first guy

because that's a very high percentage.

Do we have trash talk at QI?

No.

What do you mean?

What do you mean?

So there was a study of 4,500 companies

and you can remember people being slagged off
in that kind of gamesmanship way in the office.

61% of employees found they could remember
trash talk within the last few months.

Yeah.

And I don't think we do sledging here, really.

I've got nine years worth of...

And unfortunately for you guys, it's on record.

Q the clip.

Yeah.

This podcast, the whole HR exercise.

One day you guys are going to be called into an office, yeah.

One place where you get smack talk famously is wrestling.

Yeah.

And I was reading the book, it's called

Everything to Play For, the QI Book of Sport

by James Harkin and Anna Tyshinski.

Oh my goodness.

Sounds a lot of sounds.

Well, I don't know, it doesn't come out until October
so I don't know if it's rubbish or not.

But I suspect, the big names I suspect
it'll be quite good.

Give it a fair hearing, eh?

But they argue in that book
that the earliest depictions of wrestling that we have,
which are in the Egyptian tombs,
they're quite similar to today's pro wrestling.

So there's an argument that it could be
that all the games were fixed
because they were often shown as being
one person from Egypt, clearly,
and one person from a place that isn't Egypt, clearly,
and the Egyptian one always won.

And perhaps it was that they were fixed fights
so that the pharaoh would know
that his people were the greatest in the whole world.

Who's saying Ancient Egyptian pro wrestling is fake?

That's what I'm saying.

Sorry, no, that's what James Harkin and Anna Tyshinski are saying
in their book, Everything to Play For, the QI Book of Sport,
that's in October.

But the other thing is that there's a really early one
and there is some writing next to it
and it's an Egyptian who defeated a Nubian opponent
and he says, woe to you, oh Nubian enemy,
I will make you take a hopeless fall
in the presence of the pharaoh.

And so that's basically smack talk
from 3,200 years ago.

Tell me the flavour that you find in my ass.

Okay, that's it.

That is all of our facts.

Thank you so much for listening.

If you'd like to get in contact with any of us
about the things that we've said over the course of this podcast,
we can be found on our Twitter accounts.

I'm on at Shriverland, James.

At James Harkin.

Andy.

At Andrew Hunter M.

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And Ann.

At Miller underscore Ann.

Yep, where you can go to our group account,
which is at no such thing.

And you can also get in contact with us via our email,
podcast at qi.com.

And also go to our website.

Check out all of the previous episodes.

They are up there.

No such thing as a fish.com.

And otherwise, come back next week.

We're going to have another guest.

Thanks for coming back.

And so good to see you again.

And we'll see you then.

Goodbye.

Bye.